
Real Choices in New Haven

Promoting Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Our Community • Winter 2004 Publication



OPEN DOORS: The Diverse Paths of Disability – Disabilities Fair/Forum at Yale University

By Diane Turner and Judith York

On Tuesday April 13th and Wednesday April 14th, there will be a free-of-charge forum and fair on disabilities at Sterling Memorial Library's Lecture Hall and Memorabilia Room. The aim of the event, entitled OPEN DOORS: The Diverse Paths of Disability, is to bring attention to, increase awareness of, and educate the community about disability issues through film, video, discussions, and presentations.

On Tuesday, April 13th, the 2 day program will commence with a Reception between 6 and 7 PM and the presentation of the movie *Station Agent* between 7 and 9 PM, with popcorn (written and directed by Yale alumnus Tom McCarthy).

Events for Wednesday, April 14 begin at 9:30 AM with light refreshments followed at 10 AM by Opening Remarks and Welcome by Deputy Provost Stephanie Spangler and Roman Kuc, Chair of the Provost Advisory Committee on Resources for Students and Employees with Disabilities. At 10:15 AM, Judy York will facilitate Part I of the Panel Discussion, during which Matan Koch, a Yale alumnus, will make a presentation entitled *History of Individuals with Disabilities and Related Services at Yale*. Also during this panel session, Yale Associate General Counsel Caroline Hendel will discuss *Legal Viewpoint on Disabilities*, which includes a discussion of laws pertaining to disability in education and employment, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Rehabilitation Act.

At 12 noon, the Memorabilia Room will be opened to display exhibits of products, services, and information related to supporting various disabilities. Part II of the Panel Discussion, facilitated by Roman Kuc, will begin at 1 PM with *Current Supporting Activities for Students at Yale*, a presentation given by Sabrina Sadique, President of SNAPS

(a Yale Student organization that assists students with physical limitations and injuries). Deputy Provost Lloyd Suttle will then make a presentation entitled *Access of Facilities at Yale: Accomplishments and Plans*, which will give an overview of the physical changes that have been made to Yale campus to improve access for persons in wheelchairs. At 2:30 PM, Enricho Melchiorri of EM Enterprises will present *Naturally Speaking: Voice Recognition Technology, a Demonstration*, followed by a question and answer session and a break to the exhibit area at 3 PM.

Persons with disabilities will present the final part of the Panel, on Disability Etiquette, at 3:30 PM. They will explain what is/is not appropriate behavior when interacting with people with disabilities and will also provide information about guide and service dogs, wheelchair access, websites, hearing impairments, and assisting persons who are blind or visually impaired. At 5 PM, a PBS video entitled *How Difficult Can This Be: Understanding Learning Disabilities* (1989 Eagle Hill Productions) will be shown. This video, a taping of a workshop that simulates the experience of living with a learning disability, will prove especially useful to future teachers and faculty members.

The 6 PM Closing Reception will offer refreshments and one last chance to visit the exhibits. The program will conclude with the 7 PM screening of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* in American SignLanguage (Producer/Moderator Peter Novak, in cooperation with the Digital Media Center for the Arts). This two-day event promises to be both interesting and informative. We strongly encourage everyone to attend any or all events.



Connect to Work Center

Are you working or planning to work in the near future? Would you like to make more money in a job? Are you worried about how work will affect your benefits?

The State of Connecticut Department of Social Services, through the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, established the Connect to Work Center with two federal grants and funding from the Bureau. The Center provides individualized benefits planning and counseling for people who are on Social Security Disability Insurance and/or Supplemental Security Income Benefits, often along with state benefit programs.

Our job is to help you to understand how work will affect your benefits. We have five Benefits Specialists throughout the state who can provide:

- Specific information on the impact that working has on all the benefits received by you and your family.
- Problem solving for your specific concerns.
- Follow-up services after you return to work.

To receive benefits counseling you must be working or considering going to work in the near future. For more information please contact us at: 1-800-773-4636, 1-860-424-4839 (TTY) or by email at connecttowork.dss@po.state.ct.us.

Connect to Work Center and Bureau of Rehabilitation Services Present Workshop

The Connect to Work Center and the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services present *Taking Control of Your Life Through Understanding Benefits and Services*, a workshop for young adults (ages 14-25) and their families, educators, and support people. Participants will learn about the benefits, services, and resources available to young adults with disabilities to help them live and work in their communities. A light supper will be served.

Taking Control of Your Life will take place at Wilbur Cross High School on April 7, 2004 between 5:30 and 7:30 PM. To register, please call 1-800-773-4636 before March 29th and ask for Patti or leave a message.

Accessibility Evaluations of New Haven Restaurants and Facilities

We will be publishing articles that discuss the accessible features of restaurants and cultural facilities throughout New Haven. This issue contains articles on both *Royal Palace* (Chinese restaurant) and *Booktrader Café*. We hope that you will find this information useful.



Access Evaluation of *Royal Palace*

Royal Palace offers excellent access combined with a knowledgeable, courteous staff that is eager to maximize what is already an unusually high degree of compliance. The restaurant's staff is very responsive to the needs and suggestions of its customers, which has resulted in a large following amongst persons with disabilities.

Accessible paths of travel lead from the restaurant's spacious dining area to its two bathrooms, both of which display signage on their doors rather than to the side of their latches. Both bathrooms are for the most part accessible, with only a few small accessibility issues (knee clearance under both sinks is very slightly less than it should be, soap dishes are a bit too far from the sink edges than allowable, one bathroom has a towel dispenser too far off the ground, and the other has toilets too low to the ground as well as spring latches on stall doors). Overall, *Royal Palace* is a very accessible restaurant. It also boasts delicious Chinese food at very reasonable prices!

Access Evaluation of *Booktrader Café*

Booktrader Café is a small, charming, used bookstore and restaurant with a staff whose members are accommodating,

eager to please, and extremely knowledgeable about accessibility requirements. The *Café* has a few minor aspects that may hinder accessibility: a closed lever handle on the front door, a slightly uneven patio surface, window-seats that are a bit too high off the ground, and a few small accessibility inconveniences in the unisex bathroom. However, members of the *Booktrader's* helpful staff are eager to make any necessary modifications to the establishment. For example, the *Café* created several wider passageways between bookshelves in response to customers using wheelchairs who found the paths too narrow. The *Café's* staff is also more than happy to clear paths of access by rearranging chairs, tables, or piles of reading material as needed; just ask!

Booktrader Café's indoor dining and sitting area has a relatively clear main path, with lightweight, easy-to-move chairs. All customers may enter the patio area through the open iron gate that faces the street. Persons who use wheelchairs then travel down a walkway to another gate where, in response to the request of a client, the *Café* has constructed a 7-foot ramp to the patio. Customers may also access the patio from inside the store (and vice versa). All in all, *Booktrader Café* boasts a staff that is willing to make modifications in responsiveness to the needs and requests of their customers. We urge you to see for yourself!

Sign Interpreted and Audio Described Shows at Yale Repertory Theatre

By Steven Padla

The Yale Repertory Theatre, headed by James Bundy (Artistic Director) and Victoria Nolan (Managing Director), is deeply committed to providing the means for theatre patrons who have low vision or who are deaf, hard of hearing, or blind to have full and equal access to the live theatre experience. The Theatre offers both Audio Described and Sign Interpreted performances to persons with disabilities.

In Audio Description, a narrator describes the visual aspects of a performance in between the actors' dialogues. Yale Repertory Theatre is the first performing arts venue in the state to offer such an innovative service. The theatre has also trained New Haven communities and students from the Yale School of Drama so that they in turn can help other theatres begin audio description programs. The script that the describers narrate reaches theatre patrons through a state-of-the-art radio frequency listening system.

To benefit patrons who are deaf or hearing impaired, the theatre also offers productions that are Sign Interpreted. These performances occur on the same days as the Audio Described performances. The Sign Interpreted and Audio Described Performances for the 2003-2004 season include Carlo Gozzi's *The King Stag* and Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa's *The Mystery Plays*.

On Saturday, April 17th, 2004, Yale Repertory Theatre will present Carlo Gozzi's *The King Stag*, directed by Evan Yionoulis. The pre-show audio description will begin at 1:30 PM and the show will begin at 2 PM. On Saturday, May 22nd, 2004, Connie Grappo will direct the world premiere of Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa's *The Mystery Plays*. This show, too, will begin at 2 PM and will hold its pre-show audio description at 1:30 PM.

Other performances will include the world premiere of *Rothschild's Fiddle*, adapted and directed by Kama Ginkas and

based on the short story by Anton Chekov. Since the script is still evolving and will not be set until the night before the performance, there will not be enough time to produce an audio description or sign interpretation. However, the shows will be in Russian with English supertitles, so all patrons may attend any of the performances. Theatre patrons who are blind or have low vision should contact Ruth Feldman at (203) 432-8425 or rm.feldman@yale.edu in advance of the show to obtain a cassette or CD of Chekov's short story.

Theatre Patrons interested in Audio Described or Sign Interpreted performances should mention this fact when they place their orders for tickets. Patrons can obtain tickets for all Yale Repertory Theatre performances, including the Audio Described and Sign Interpreted shows, by calling the Yale Repertory Theatre Box Office at (203) 432-1234. Patrons may also purchase tickets in person at the Box Office, located at 1120 Chapel Street (at York Street), or on-line at www.yalerep.org.

For more information on these shows, theatre patrons should contact Ruth Feldman at (203) 432-8425 or rm.feldman@yale.edu. Members of the press who are interested in covering or attending an Audio Described or Sign Interpreted Performance should contact the Theatre's Press Office to make the necessary arrangements.

Yale Repertory Theatre
222 York Street
P.O. Box 208244
New Haven, CT 06520-8244
(203) 432-1574

Notes

** All information for this article from e-mail to Judy York, "Fwd: Yale Rep announces Audio Described and Sign Interpreted Performance Dates," by Steven Padla, Media Relations Manager, Yale Repertory Theater, November 17 2003.

The Yale Center for Children with Special Health Care Needs

By Iris Thompson

The Yale Center for Children with Special Health Care Needs, based in the Yale School of Medicine, helps to administer Title V of the Social Security Act of 1935, entitled "Children with Special Health Care Needs." The Center, located in New Haven, serves children living all across the state from birth until eighteen years of age by providing coordination of care, family support services, and transition planning. Qualified families may also obtain extended funds for direct service payments, though the Center will not provide funding directly.

Regardless of income or insurance status, all families of children with special health care needs are eligible to access the Center's network of professionals to obtain clinical expertise, resource identification and referral, and advocacy. The Center's goal is to help families and primary care providers partner to ensure that children with special health care needs receive comprehensive and coordinated care. The Center achieves these goals by promoting capacity-building in community-based systems, identifying gaps in the system and addressing them through infrastructure-strengthening strategies, providing family-centered care in a culturally-sensitive environment, and providing family care coordination services.

The needs of children as active community participants arise in many areas of inclusion, including education, housing, and childcare. The Center strongly believes that it is critical for children to feel that they belong to and are welcome in their community.

In New Haven, the Real Choice Systems Change Grant will address the barriers that face persons with disabilities. The Yale Center for Children with Special Health Care Needs wishes to be active in ensuring that the Grant will truly benefit the City of New Haven and will result in the best outcomes possible for New Haven's young citizens.

To learn more about the Yale Center for Children with Special Health Care Needs, please call (203) 764-8175 or toll-free 1-888-842-1937, or visit the Center's website at <http://specialkids.yale.edu>.

Subsidized Housing for Persons with Disabilities

The Housing Authority of New Haven is currently accepting applications from single persons for studio apartments. At present, the waiting list is fairly short; eligible applicants are likely to receive housing within 6-12 months, or perhaps sooner (depending on how early they apply).

Eligibility for single-person studio apartments is limited to elderly persons or persons with disabilities. Applicants must meet federal income limits for single-person households (total annual income cannot exceed \$39,550). Rents are income-based and typically come to 30% of tenants' incomes.

The apartments have terrific locations all throughout the City, including McQueeney Towers: 358 Orange Street in downtown New Haven, Crawford Manor: 90 Park Street in central New Haven, Winslow-Celentano: 60 Warren Street in Wooster Square, Robert T. Wolfe: 49 Union Avenue across from the train station, Valentina Macri Court: 17 Frank Street in the Hill neighborhood, Fairmont Heights: 70 & 72 Fairmont Avenue in Fair Haven, Ruoppolo Manor: 480 Ferry Street in Fair Haven, and Ribicoff Cottages: 200 Brookside Avenue in West Rock.

Please note that the Housing Authority will only accept applications from one-person households for its studio apartments. The waiting lists for larger apartments, those intended for households with two or more members, are currently closed.

However, the Housing Authority is accepting applications for wheelchair-accessible apartments in public housing (all bedroom sizes) as well as applications for supportive housing programs. These supportive programs provide subsidized housing with full-time, on-site staff and supportive services to assist persons with psychiatric disabilities and substance abuse problems. Persons with disabilities can receive a preference for the supportive housing programs. If you are interested in supportive housing, please ask the Housing Authority staff to provide you with a "preference form" to verify your eligibility.



For more information on these and other programs, or to pick up applications, visit the Housing Authority's Service Center on the corner of Orange and Audubon Streets (360 Orange Street), or call 498-8800 or TDD: 497-8434.



Goffe Street Condominium For Sale

By Janice Dipollina

Goffe Street Condominium, a completely rehabilitated, 3-bedroom wheelchair-accessible condominium on the Corner of Goffe and Orchard, is now available for immediate sale and occupancy. The sale price is \$70,000, with a potential \$15,000 grant toward down payment and closing costs if the prospective occupant or family qualifies under guidelines.

The purchasing process will go more smoothly if the prospective home-buyer has taken a homeownership course and has received certification (or is about to finish the course and receive certification). Fees for the condominium are currently \$100 per month. Interested parties should contact Janice Dipollina at Livable City Initiative at 946-8569 to obtain additional information.

